



Bernalillo County Open Space News

Bernalillo County Open Space strives to be a dynamic network of properties with important natural or cultural resources managed to benefit people, plants, and wildlife by protecting and enhancing viewsheds, water resources, wildlife habitat, cultural/historic sites, and prime agricultural lands; and providing resource-based recreation and environmental education.

The Top 10 Reasons to Appreciate Open Space by Ed Chismar, Director of Parks and Recreation

In simple terms, Open Spaces are lands that are purposely preserved for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations. Each county Open Space possesses a different character, yet has commonalities including wildlife habitat, water resources and resource-based recreation opportunities.

Here are the top 10 reasons to support Open Space:

1. To keep the properties owned, preserved and open to the public today and for future generations.
2. To provide habitat for flora and fauna including birds, mammals and other wildlife.
3. To allow for natural occurrences, like rain water percolating into the ground thereby replenishing groundwater.
4. To allow trees and other vegetation to absorb air pollution.
5. To provide an outdoor experience within the urban environment.
6. To provide character, charm and economic value for neighborhoods.
7. To provide a contrast from dense urban landscapes.
8. To provide a sense of awe at the diversity and magnificence found in nature in our community.
9. To be the outdoor classroom for educational and recreational purposes.
10. To contribute to quality of life, an important element that is vital in keeping talented mobile members of the workforce in New Mexico, and attract visitors and potential employers.

The public owns Bernalillo County Open Space properties. I hope their value is as important to you, as it is to those of us who manage them.

New Partnership Protects Urban Open Space

A unique urban open space has been preserved in the heart of Albuquerque, thanks to Bernalillo County. Commissioner Maggie Hart Stebbins, neighborhood and university leaders in August 2012 celebrated a unique partnership with the University of New Mexico that will protect the North Golf Course as Urban Open Space. The 76-acre course is now protected from development for 15 years and becomes the first county-affiliated Urban Open Space located in Commission District 3. "Today we celebrate the actions of two public entities, UNM and Bernalillo County, who have come together in a true partnership to do something great for the people of this community," Commissioner Hart Stebbins said after negotiations were completed.



The county will invest \$1.5 million to upgrade the outdated and inefficient irrigation system, replace aging tree stock, and improve the popular pedestrian trail. The university will continue to own and maintain the course. County-sponsored public events at this property will be announced. Check www.bernco.gov for updates.

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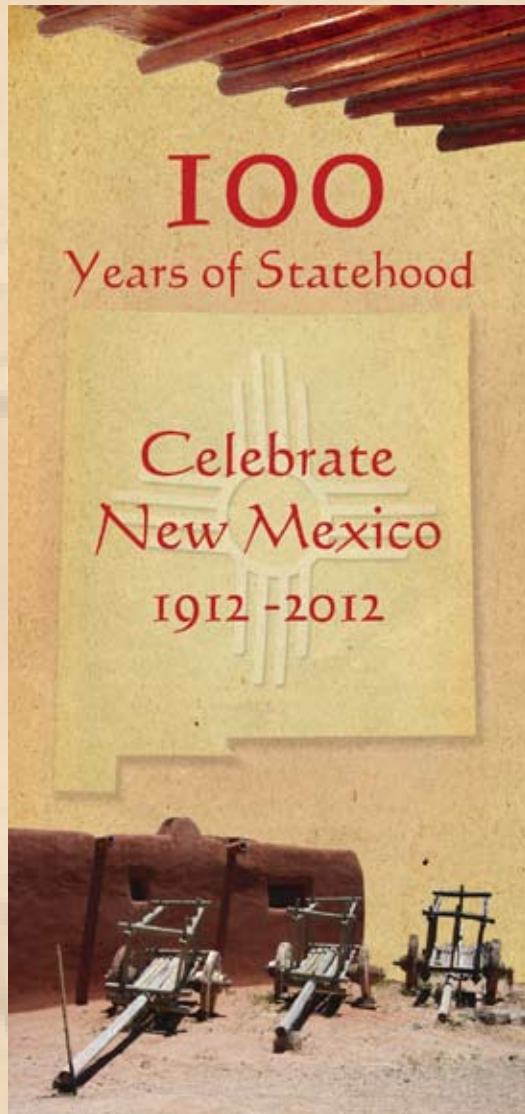
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New Mexico Centennial Celebration

New Mexico is a place that captures the heart with its unique blend of ancient and recent history, and this year the New Mexico Centennial Coalition celebrated that history through numerous efforts that were presented in the collaborative publication, "Celebrate New Mexico: 100 Years of Statehood." Twenty-eight organizations throughout Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties listed events, speakers, publications, exhibits, parades and fiestas in the publication that provided numerous opportunities for the public and visitors to learn about our Land of Enchantment.



Bernalillo County Open Space organized a number of centennial events covering such topics as acequias and edible landscapes, Route 66, first settlers and pioneers of the East Mountains, and the history of Alameda. Additionally, Open Space and the Hubbell House Alliance teamed up to present "Cien Años Despues—100 Years Later" that provided information on the Pajarito Land Grant and intriguing stories of New Mexicans. Finally, Open Space worked with the Pajarito Village Association to develop four interpretive signs with the theme of a changing landscape that covered human, agriculture, vegetative and wildlife history of the Middle Rio Grande.



"Celebrate New Mexico: 100 Years of Statehood" was sponsored and organized by Bernalillo County Open Space and can be found on the Open Space website at www.bernco.gov/openspace

Agriculture and Open Space

Backyard Farming Series

Thomas Jefferson wrote to George Washington in 1787, "Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness." Food has always played a central role in communities from holidays and family gatherings to its sustainability and wealth. The recognition for local agriculture and backyard farming is ever growing and producing the fruits of happiness right here in Bernalillo County. Participants of this year's Backyard Farming Series learned about gardening from the ground up with soil science and composting to hoop house construction and tree care. Overall, nine workshops were held and received positive public feedback. "The presenters were all really knowledgeable," stated one participant, "I liked getting samples from the cast iron cooking section and how much I learned." For those of you who did not get an opportunity to attend the workshops but would like to view some of the resources, visit the following website: <http://OSbackyardfarming.wordpress.com>.



Annual Local Food Festival and Field Day



This year's fifth annual Local Food Festival and Field Day was a smashing success. An estimated 6,000 participants graced the agriculture fields at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House and partook in the festivities. Over 60 vendors displayed their local goods from homemade barbecue sauce, jams, and baked goods to bee products, solar ovens, ristras and fresh veggies. Children of all ages were decorated with elaborate face paint, scaled a climbing wall, made healthy snacks and felt the soft pelts of bunnies and other farm animals. For the foodies in town, their appetite was whetted with chef's demonstration and tastings. Inside the Gutierrez-Hubbell

House were beautiful portraits of New Mexicans from afar and live storytelling with the Families Eating And Storytelling Together (FEAST) project. Throughout the day, the bands Los Jarañeros del Valle and Mala Maña kept the festive atmosphere hopping and everyone on their toes. This event captures the essence of New Mexico family fun while supporting local agriculture and boosting our economy. Bernalillo County Open Space continues to be a proud sponsor of this event, working alongside the Mid-Region Council of Governments and other partners to help it evolve into an ever-enriching experience for the community.

Food for People

Since 2011, the Bernalillo County Extension Office has managed the agriculture fields at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House growing carrots, bell peppers, spinach, onions, squash and much more. More than 2,000 pounds of these fresh vegetables were donated in 2012 to the Roadrunner Food Bank, which was then widely distributed to individuals and organizations throughout the county. People in need are getting healthy food to supplement their diets and liven up their dishes. The collaboration between the Roadrunner Food Bank, Bernalillo County Extension Office and Open Space is a model of success demonstrating what can be accomplished when organizations work together.



Explorations in East Mountains

East Mountain Interpretive Walks

The Open Space properties in the East Mountains are teeming with wildlife and encompass a deep history that persists today. Through this year's interpretive walks, Bernalillo County presented five events with 182 people in attendance. We kicked off the year with forest ecology led by expert Sue Hansen who discussed the state of our forests and how land managers are promoting healthier ecosystems through fuelwood reductions. Participants were given a firsthand example at Sabino Canyon where the county completed a fuel thinning in 2010. We continued the year with birding at Ojito de San Antonio, a birding hotspot according to the Central New Mexico Audubon Society. We then explored native plants of the East Mountains and their medicinal properties with three knowledgeable speakers.

Our largest event was at Carlito Springs where we celebrated Route 66 as part of the New Mexico Centennial Celebration. Despite the chilly weather that day, participants learned all about the history of Route 66, and delved deeper into the stories along the historic route with expert speakers and historians David Dunaway, Baker Morrow and Kaisa Barthuli. One participant exclaimed, "Really enjoyed the event at Carlito Springs. A truly magical place." We topped the year off with a discussion on the first settlers and pioneers of the East Mountains and a sneak preview of the Ojito de San Antonio Interpretive Guide. This year's events were met with enthusiasm and truly captured what makes the East Mountain Open Space properties unique and important for our community.



Land Health Monitoring

Master naturalists teamed up with Sandia High School students to investigate the water quality at Ojito de San Antonio. They observed intriguing benthic macroinvertebrates that thrive in clean, cold water such as mayflies, caddisflies, and dragonflies. Additional monthly monitoring efforts by hydrologist Kali Bronson indicates that the spring water flowing across the property and eventually down the Tijeras Creek to the Rio Grande is healthy.



Historic Orchards

There are a number of historic orchards on Bernalillo County's Open Space properties including Ojito de San Antonio and Carlito Springs in the East Mountains, Bachechi in the North Valley and the Gutierrez-Hubbell House in the South Valley. The county started working at Ojito de San Antonio in 2009 with the Bernalillo County Extension Office, high school students and other local partners to map, identify, assess and graft the fruit trees. This project came full circle this year when 40 heirloom apple trees were planted in February to ensure the orchard's future preservation for historic sentiments and wildlife forage. The irrigation for the trees originates from a solar-powered well, and so far all the trees are thriving.

Naturalist Series and Bachechi Open Space

Naturalist Series

The Naturalist Series, new this year, comprised of 11 workshops with 380 people in attendance. This was quite a feat since this was the first year of programming at Bachechi Open Space. The purpose of the series was to awaken the senses to the natural world through observations and learning from local experts about the bosque ecosystem. Participants explored wetland ecology and the flora and fauna of the property.



"Great program yesterday, thx for all the prep work that goes into these workshops. Learned a lot and my daughter loved getting into the pond scum! Have a great summer!" - participant feedback



They engaged in observations through seasonal nature journaling and nature photography. County staff also partnered with The Albuquerque Astronomical Society for a stargazing and astronomy event on the basics of identifying celestial sightings. One of the largest events this year was an Arbor Day celebration where participants rotated through three different stations: tree care with expert arborists, trees as wildlife and tree anatomy, and Project Learning Tree activities. All the participants received a free New Mexico olive tree at the end of the day donated by Tree New Mexico. This was a fun-filled and packed year full of activities for the whole family.

Environmental Education Building

Since the opening of Bachechi Open Space, Bernalillo County with the help of The Cottonwood Gulch Foundation supported 32 rentals including 878 people at the Environmental Education Building free of charge. Renters include groups like the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Green Building Council, Albuquerque Public Schools, UNM Department of Pediatrics, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico for the Outdoors Coalition, and the Nature Conservancy. Cynthia Stephenson from the New Mexico Association of Counties said, "We had a fabulous meeting at your beautiful facility and all of the participants commented on the facility. Eric was awesome to work with and we'll use your facility again as the need arises." To inquire about reservations, call 505-314-0398 or email calangan@bernco.gov.

Families Exploring the Wonders of Nature

Bernalillo County Open Space worked with AmeriCorps volunteer Heather Toman and master naturalists to develop a new project, Nature Packs, to get kids and their families outdoors exploring. The theme-based backpacks are chock full of hands-on goodies used to investigate bugs, wetlands, animal tracks, and birds. When the project was launched during the summer, 129 people used nature packs: 60 adults and 69 students. As an extension of this project, Open Space staff partnered with the Wonder of Learning Collaborative to offer a workshop providing parents and guardians of young children with tools for deepening experiences in nature.



Engaging Youth in Outdoors

Bernalillo County Open Space strives to provide and support meaningful educational opportunities for all ages, especially youth. The Open Space staff work closely with partners on programs dealing with water conservation like RiverXchange who target 5th-grade students both in the classroom and out in the field, as well as the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program which works with over 7,000 students a year providing citizen science experiences along the Rio Grande.



RiverXchange

This year Bernalillo County Open Space and Cottonwood Gulch supported nine RiverXchange fieldtrips with 5th-graders at Bachechi. Working with La Plazita Institute, the county supported three fieldtrips at Sanchez Farm Open Space. Students learned about wetland ecology and stormwater issues specific to the Middle Rio Grande watershed.



Boy Scouts Projects

Two young men completed their Eagle Scout projects on Open Space this year. Cole Milhollin constructed a beautifully carved log seating area at Sabino Canyon that can now be enjoyed by visitors. Paul Alexander and Troop 505 removed Siberian elm seedlings and girdled larger elms trees at the Bachechi Northstar Arboretum. Additionally, they installed a number of birdhouses for ducks, Northern flickers, wrens and bluebirds.

César Chávez Day of Service

Hundreds of elementary, middle and high school students came out to Sanchez Farm Open Space in honor of César Chávez. During this annual day of service, the students learned about the importance of healthy foods by drinking cactus juice, got their hands dirty building garden beds and planting vegetables, and cast native grass and wildflower seeds that became picturesque grassy fields later in the year. This large-scale event is organized by the Recuerda a César Chávez Committee, comprised of numerous partners including La Plazita Institute and Bernalillo County Open Space.



High School and Middle School Students

Students helped with land health monitoring at Ojito de San Antonio by testing the water quality at the springs and investigating the types of insects that inhabit the waters.



Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program

This program works with students in grades K-12 collecting data along the Middle Rio Grande that is widely used to paint a picture of the bosque's overall condition. These students build direct connections with their local environment and in so doing, increase public understanding of a complex ecosystem as well as fulfill essential research needs. Bernalillo County Open Space continues to sponsor this important program.



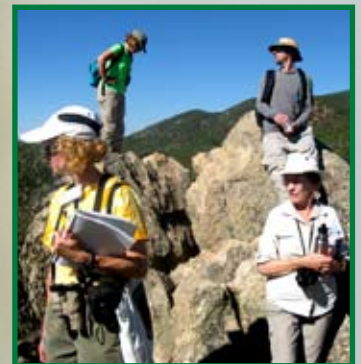
Master Naturalist Program

This third year of the Master Naturalist program marks the end of the pilot phase. To date, there are 40 certified master naturalists and 28 active interns. The master naturalists receive numerous benefits from the program including a free intensive training on local ecology, friendships with fellow naturalists, and an opportunity to give back to the community in a meaningful way. This is a win-win situation for all involved.

The Master Naturalist program has become the cornerstone of Open Space. Participants help to extend the reach of what Bernalillo County is able to accomplish by providing much-needed expertise and resources. Naturalists help in developing educational materials such as the Nature Packs project and lessons for teachers. They assist with restoration and research projects including wildlife studies, land health monitoring and forest and orchard management. Naturalists also volunteer with partnering agencies including the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, Museum of Southwest Biology, Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Going State wide

One of the main goals of the Master Naturalist program since its inception was to develop a pilot that may be replicated for additional programs throughout New Mexico. Early in 2012, Bernalillo County Open Space and the Master Naturalist Advisory Committee invited organizations throughout the state to a presentation. Colleen McRoberts gave an overview of how the Master Naturalist program is structured and past successes. The committee members presented their role in the program and the benefits to their organizations, and master naturalist participants talked about what they have gotten out of the program. Since that meeting, two budding chapters are starting up including the Whitfield Master Naturalist Chapter in Valencia County and the Chihuahuan Desert Master Naturalist Chapter in Doña Ana County.



Master Naturalist Program Mission Statement

The Bernalillo County Open Space Master Naturalist Program aims to instill the pursuit of life-long learning and promote environmental stewardship. Participants are actively engaged through education and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources on Open Space properties.



Major Improvements and Accomplishments at Open Space

Pajarito Open Space

Bernalillo County put the final touches on Pajarito Open Space by installing additional furnishings including a shade structure, picnic table and benches. Additionally, Open Space worked with the Pajarito Neighborhood Association to develop and install four interpretive signs with the overarching theme of a changing landscape. The signs focus on change over time in the Middle Rio Grande as it pertains to the history of human settlements, agriculture, vegetation and wildlife. Finally, Open Space with the help of the neighboring community and volunteers planted native shrubs and trees for wildlife in the newly acquired tract that provides pedestrian access to the property from Pajarito Road.



Carlito Springs Open Space

This year, Bernalillo County worked with contractors Morrow Reardon Wilkinson and Miller, Ltd. to complete the Carlito Springs Cultural Landscape Report. The report identified significant historical and environmental features throughout the property, assessed the structures, and investigated the springhead. This report now provides a blueprint for future development at the property, providing access to the public while keeping in mind the preservation of these significant features.

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

This year, Bernalillo County and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the first urban wildlife refuge in the Southwest – Valle de Oro. The refuge covers 390 acres at the site of the former Price's Dairy farm at 7851 2nd Street S.W., along the Rio Grande bosque. Bernalillo County contributed \$5 million toward the project and Commissioner Art De La Cruz was a driving force behind the establishment of the refuge, located in the Mountain View neighborhood of the South Valley. "I will continue to partner with our neighborhoods to identify positive education and economic development opportunities at Valle de Oro in our beautiful South Valley," Commissioner De La Cruz said. The site is not yet open to the public. The Fish and Wildlife Service is working to purchase the entire project site over the next two years and will be working with the community during that time to develop a public use program.



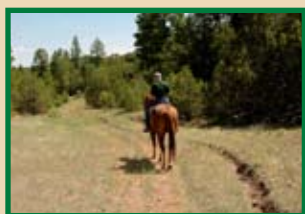
Additional Property Highlights

East Mountain Properties



Ojito de San Antonio

Forty heirloom fruit trees were planted in the historic orchard at Ojito de San Antonio with the help of high school students and master naturalists. Land health monitoring continues at the property on a regular basis including wildlife studies and water quality monitoring. Finally, Bernalillo County is working with the State Forestry Division and Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District to complete a fuelwood thinning prescription that will take place in early 2013.



Sedillo Ridge

An archaeological and biological survey was completed at Sedillo Ridge in 2012. This survey is the first step to future development at the property, including a fuelwood thinning project that the county hopes to embark upon over the next two years.



Sabino Canyon

Custom-made benches were installed throughout the property, as well as a shade structure and picnic tables near the main parking area. Additionally, Eagle Scout Cole Milhollin constructed and installed a beautiful natural log seating area. A culvert will be installed in 2013 under the road leading up to the west side of the property to deter erosion.

Valley Properties



Bachechi

Bernalillo County offered free workshops to the public through the Naturalist Series, supported a number of field trips and educational events for youth, held the master naturalist training in the Environmental Education Building, and provided nature packs to families. Additionally, the property has been used by numerous community groups, free of charge.



Durand Open Space

Bernalillo County Open Space completed a site plan for the north section of the property in 2012. The plan calls for improvements to the parking area, including horse trailer and designated vehicle parking spaces. In the northwest section of the property, a community gathering space with additional tables, benches, a shade structure, and wooden sculptures will be installed.



Gutierrez-Hubbell House

Bernalillo County and the Hubbell House Alliance completed an exhibit master plan in early 2012, and began Phase 2 of the plan. The plan aligns the physical features of the house and the land, interpretive information, family history, and revenue generating potential into a cohesive, attractive, informative, and educational package to attract visitors.



Sanchez Farm

The county leveled the agriculture fields and amended the soil by bringing in yards of compost. An additional culvert was installed to assist with flood irrigation. Wildlife crops were planted in many of the lower fields. Additionally, a number of native shrubs and trees were planted, and an extended wetlands was constructed that helps filter polluted stormwater and provides prime habitat for wetland species.

Bernalillo County Open Space Staff Message

The public and the county benefit from dedicated, talented, and focused staff who work in the Planning and Open Space and Land Management sections of Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department. These individuals take pride in planning, designing, implementing, and maintaining properties and programs so that the public can take advantage of resource-based recreation and environmental education opportunities – for free.

Open Space Farewell Message for Clay Campbell, former Planning Manager for Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department

For almost 14 years, Parks and Recreation benefitted by employing Clay Campbell as its planning manager. The position, initially unknown to Clay, would include the operations associated with brand new Open Space properties.



Before leaving, Mr. Campbell said, "After nearly 14 years of planning and managing various recreational projects for the Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department, and of developing the Open Space from scratch, I am moving on to new professional challenges and opportunities. I am forever indebted to my staff and county colleagues, non-county agencies and partners, and the public for giving me the opportunity to catalyze a permanent, enriching, and indelible legacy for Bernalillo County. Thank you."

Clay Campbell played a central role in developing 12 Open Space projects. His support for the Valle del Oro National Wildlife Refuge was his last successful project. Campbell took great pride in everything he did. His planning skills, his thorough attention to detail, and effective organizational skills were a benefit to the department. His vision is manifested in the Bernalillo County Open Space properties located in all regions in the county. Clay Campbell has left his thumbprint on Bernalillo County Open Space and Parks and Recreation. We in Parks and Recreation wish him the very best as Bernalillo County Capital Improvement Program Manager. – Parks and Recreation Director Ed Chismar.

Land Management Hard at Work

The Land Management staff oversees the maintenance and day-to-day operations of Bernalillo County Open Space properties. These jack-of-all trades, hardworking employees constantly go above and beyond the call of duty by working with local partners to implement best management practices, assisting with programs at Open Space, including youth events, and constantly keeping up on a myriad of trainings and certifications.

Land Management staff helps citizen scientists plant heritage apple trees at Ojito de San Antonio. After the planting, staff continues to care for the saplings, making sure they thrive.



Land Management staff completes the final touches on the Bachechi Memorial by transplanting the original Bachechi roses.

Volunteer Appreciation

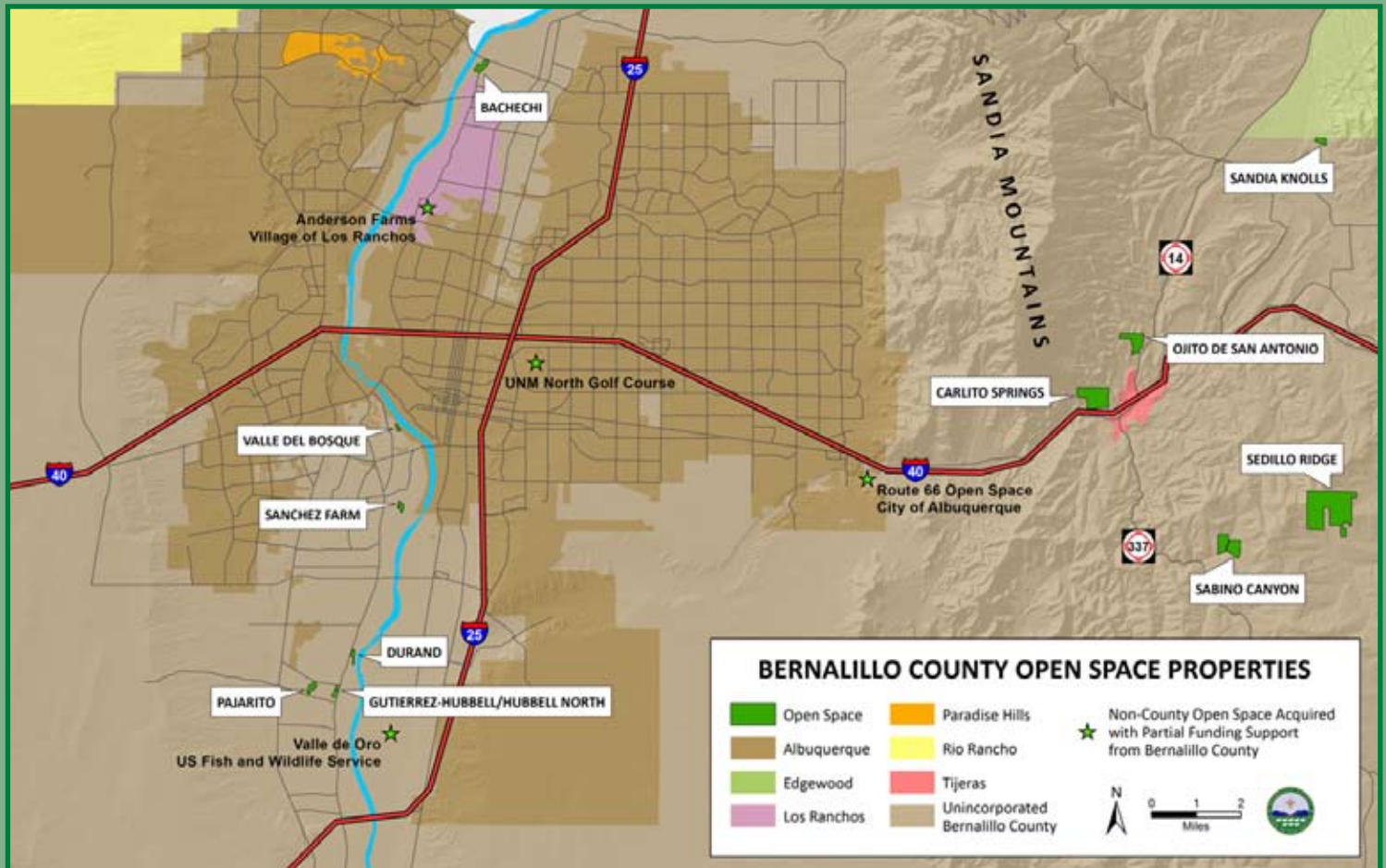
Bernalillo County Open Space is fortunate to work with many amazing partners and volunteers and would not be able to accomplish as much without their dedication. Every year the county acknowledges a couple of stellar volunteers. This year, the Open Space Program acknowledges Master Naturalist Linda McDowell and Hubbell House Alliance Resident Caretaker Beva Sanchez-Padilla.

Beva Sanchez-Padilla has worked closely with the Open Space staff for three years as a representative of the Hubbell House Alliance. Beva brings creativity, inspiration and leadership to the management and program development at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House History and Cultural Center. Bernalillo County thanks Beva for her exceptional work.



Linda McDowell was part of the first group of master naturalists in 2010 and continues to dedicate her time and efforts in developing the Open Space program. This year, Linda helped to start the Nature Packs project alongside naturalist Amy Miller and AmeriCorps volunteer Heather Toman. Linda McDowell also inspired and helped organize the Families Exploring the Wonders of Nature workshop for parents. Bernalillo County thanks Linda for her contributions.

Open Space Properties Map



A Word from Land Management

If there are any concerns that may be a maintenance issue at any Open Space property, please contact us at 505-224-2119. Each call will be evaluated and put into our workorder system. If you experience a public safety concern, call the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office at 505-468-7100. For emergencies, call 911.



Dog waste is the second largest source of fecal coliform pollution in the Rio Grande.

Today, many of us get a percentage of our drinking water from the Rio Grande. Do your part to keep our water clean by picking up after your dogs.



**Please Pick Up
After Your Dog!**



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